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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 000455

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STATE FOR EUR/PM, AND NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/22/2016

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: OMAN ASSURES DUTCH ON NATO RELATIONS

REF: MUSCAT 229 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. William R. Stewart.  
Reason: 1.4 (b, d).

1. (SBU) In a March 21 confidential memo, acting "Allied Contact Point Ambassador" to Oman, Dutch Ambassador Annelies Boogaardt, shared with Charge her readout of a March 15 meeting she conducted with the Foreign Ministry's International Organizations Department Chief Ambassador Talib bin Miran al-Raisi regarding NATO's Istanbul Cooperative Initiative (ICI).

2. (C) According to the memo, al-Raisi stated the Foreign Ministry did not have a problem with ICI membership but was awaiting Ministry of Defense (MOD) approval and the complete analysis of ICI member benefits before committing. Al-Raisi reassured Boogaardt that MOD has been included in ICI membership discussions from the start, but that it needed more time to study all the ramifications of membership. Urging patience, he promised to raise the issue with MOD again prior to the NATO Parliamentarians visit to Oman in April (reftel). He did not know exactly when a decision might be made, but optimistically projected that Oman will indeed become an ICI member in the future. Observing that the ICI Menu of Activities largely consists of things in which Oman is already engaged with such NATO friends as the U.S., UK and France, he did express a particular interest in courses at NATO Defense College.

3. (C) Comment: Ambassador al-Raisi has previously revealed to us the MOD's skepticism about engaging with NATO, as well as more general Omani political unease about being seen as siding with a non-Arab military alliance. A supporter of NATO engagement himself, his efforts to win government acceptance of the ICI have been further complicated by the disillusionment of other GCC states who, in the Omani optic, rushed to embrace NATO as an illusory security shroud without having any realistic concept of what NATO was actually willing to do. As al-Raisi assured Ambassador Boogaardt, once Oman finally joins the ICI, it will do so with a sound understanding of all it entails.

STEWART